



## Housing Assistance & Models Meeting Notes

**TO:**  
Sally Harrison, MSHDA

**FROM:**  
Nicholas Armit, PPA

**SUBJECT:**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Housing Assistance & Models  
(HA&M) Meeting Notes, November 10,  
2008

**DATE:**  
November 17, 2008

### *Items Relevant to Other Workgroups*

- The training team might be needed to help in educating the public on what Housing First does and what it could do for their region.
- The following Action Items will be referred to the training committee for further review. Please refer to the HA&M Action Plan for overview of Strategy and Recommendation:
  - *Strategy 3, Action Item 1b:* Develop partnership strategies that assist homeless and at-risk household to overcome obstacles of poor credit, poor rental history, and/or criminal history for existing housing.
  - *Strategy 3, Action Item 1e:* Collaborate with Michigan Housing Council, Apartment Owners Association (s), NAHRO, and other property management partners to maintain a real-time inventory of units that can be made available for housing homeless and at-risk household (via Housing Locator technology).

Public Policy Research,  
Development,  
and Evaluation

Jeffrey D. Padden

President

### *Attendees*

- |                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ■ Sally Harrison, MSHDA, Co-Chair | ■ Suzanne, Missaukee             |
| ■ Michelle Wildman, Co-Chair      | ■ Gary Bell, Ann Arbor           |
| ■ Joe Tardella, Detroit           | ■ Holly Pomranka, Berrien County |
| ■ Pat Caruso, DHS                 | ■ Jim Yarbough, DOC              |
| ■ Shanna Cherubini, Western U.P.  | ■ Nicholas Armit, PPA            |
| ■ Patti Geisert, MMCA             | ■ Daniel Gough, PPA              |
| ■ Stacy Vandenberg, Muskegon      |                                  |

### *Discussion Items*

#### **Co-Chair for Housing Assistance and Models**

- Sally Harrison stated that with Michele Wildman having agreed to act as the co-chair for the workgroup, Sally, Michelle, and Nick will be discussing how to put her role into practice at the next HA&M Workgroup meeting in December.

119 Pere Marquette  
Lansing, MI 48912-1231

517-485-4477

Fax: 485-4488

[ppa@publicpolicy.com](mailto:ppa@publicpolicy.com)

[www.publicpolicy.com](http://www.publicpolicy.com)

### Reviewing Minutes from Previous Meeting

- SH introduced the group to the minutes created by PPA of the previous meeting. She thanked PPA for the work completed on the minutes and that she saw no need for changes.
- Sally reminded the group that at the last meeting the Group Charter was approved.
  - *Note:* The updated charter was provided as a handout at Meeting 3.
- In the last meeting, Action Plan Strategies 1 and 2 were completed. Strategy 3 was started.
- Again, the group was reminded that most of the strategies were developed by the Governor's Academy and the Affordable Housing Communities' 5-Year Plan.
  - The group believes it is better to work from the documents already created and from the work already done than trying to recreate it.
- Some repetitive or completed action items were deleted from the Action Plan. Discussions included any modifications or additions that might need to be made.
  - Sally referred the group to the meeting minutes for detailed notes regarding the changes made and the referrals of certain items to other workgroups
- Sally reiterated that most of the future meetings will be over the phone, and will last about an hour.
  - The meetings will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month at 1:00 PM.
  - Sally hopes to have another in-person meeting sometime in the spring.

### Develop Action Plan

The group began the discussions about the Action Plan by referring back to Strategies 1 and 2 and determining who will lead the work on which recommendation and Action Plan items.

*Strategy #1: Promote transition to "Housing First" orientation by community-based agencies and homeless service providers.*

- Strategy #1 now has action steps.
- Are we still in agreement with those action steps? The group said "yes."
- Sally had some issues with the assignments. Have we actually narrowed down the audience for the action steps? Which groups should be included or not?
- Need to go through the strategies and the action items and assign people to work on moving them forward.

### Action Items 1a and 1b

- With regards to the models in Strategy 1a and the triage plan in 1b, Pat will lead with help from Stacey and Joe. Sally Harrison will ask someone from supportive housing at MSHDA to help as well.

### Action Items 1c, 1d, and 1e

- It was decided that plans 1c, 1d, and 1e can all go together.
  - Holly will take the lead on these information-gathering assignments about making affordable housing available throughout the state.
  - They will also be liaisons to the training workgroup.
  - Michelle will assist.
  - Sally will ask someone from MSHDA to help as well.

*Strategy 2: Increase access to existing affordable housing opportunities, in both urban and rural areas, for homeless populations through state-local partnerships, planning, and prioritization.*

#### Action Item 1a

- Jim has been working internally with MSHDA and he has agreed to take the lead on this strategy.
- This strategy focuses on the Housing Choice Voucher program's tenant selection criteria with regards to criminal screening. Very relevant and important when it comes to people who are homeless.
- Poor credit and lack of income have been issues in this area.
- Some organizations are having problems getting people into these housing units because of selection criteria.
- Need to discuss tax credit units and market rate units where people might not meet the criteria and are therefore denied housing.
- Sally: Might help if Jim's group can brainstorm the other tenant selection criteria issues.
- Holly: We work with those that have credit issues, and have been successful working with those that do not meet the criteria because of credit; no luck with regards to those with criminal backgrounds.
- Michelle: It's really more about education, as some of the larger tax credit projects came about we realized that larger management companies are easier to work with; they can see the benefits.
- Really, there are different problems with each tenant selection criteria.
- Sally: Jim will look at the education component and come up with some strategies on income limits and poor credit and that kind of thing.
  - Patty will help Jim with these issues. She works with these issues all the time.

#### Action Item 1b:

- MSHDA is doing Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) which will probably be going out at the time of the meeting, and service-based agencies will be able to apply for that. Sally did not know if the other Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) and other participating jurisdictions (for example, Oakland County and Wayne County) have been using their home dollars for TBRA.
  - Genesee and Flint both are. Genesee's is going very well, Flint's is kind of a nightmare.
- Sally volunteered Janet to take the lead, with help from MSHDA, on finding out which jurisdictions are doing TBRA.
- As there is a whole manual out there on this, maybe this will be a strategy on encouraging the participating jurisdictions to do this?
- Michelle would be a good reference with regard to this topic.

#### Action Item 2a:

- Goes back to what Jim will be working on.
- RPHA plan developed on how to spread the word.
- This will be combined with action item 1a, to be handled by Jim Yarbrough.

#### Action Item 2b

- A current MSHDA committee is assigned the tool kits and strategies to distribute and educate PHAs and participating jurisdictions.
- Jim: This is a training issue.

- Sally: Not sure if that is really a toolkit or a strategy...on how to conduct a risk analysis.
- Jim: If defined that way we could do that.
  - Will be handled by Jim as well.

#### Action Item 3a

- MSHDA does have standardized policies for security deposits and first months rent, but that does not mean they are all followed the same way.
- Pat: DHS does not do housing inspections, and I do not see us doing that. Before one can get a security deposit and/or first months rent, landlords must complete documents regarding lead content, particularly if children are involved.
- Looking into the possibility that someone at DHS can help with this. Looking at the standardization of the implementation of the process? That is what people are saying, that it varies.
- Pat: No problem. We are in the process of figuring a way to standardize the plan and implementation process.
  - Would like to include the manager over the state emergency release program. Problem is they are doing bridges 24/7.
  - Will take this and see who in DHS can help.
  - DHS will take this minus the housing section.

*Strategy 3: Expand housing opportunities for homeless and at-risk populations through creation of working partnerships with property owners, landlords, and developers – linked to local plans for implementation*

- The group began to review this strategy and determine which action items should be kept, deleted, or modified; and then who should be responsible for leading the work on the action items.

#### Action Item 1a

- The action item is to be retained.

#### Action Item 1b

- Should be deleted and be referred to the training team headed by Jim.

#### Action Item 1c

- Office of Existing Housing is right now referred to as the Housing Choice Voucher Office and it is using existing vacant subsidized units with project-based vouchers.
  - MSHDA is already doing this with the Qualified Allocation Plan that went out within the existing portfolio.
  - A good strategy with a lot of vacant units out there.
  - If HUD allows a tax credit development we can put project based vouchers in place.
  - There is a lot of demand out there from developers.
- Pat: We need to focus on where these vacancies are, how we can link them with providers to make sure the homeless are getting these units.
- Sally volunteered John Peterson for the lead on this action plan

- Campaign for Supportive Housing has agreed to develop the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between the developers and the service agencies, with these and the new ones that are coming out.
- Ask John to come back with a strategy that CSH is laying out for comments from the group.
- Patty: We also need to work on getting the word out to the continuums.
  - Patty to work with John to share information.
  - The process should be not only how to pull this all together, but also how to get the word out as well.
- One of our main goals should be to help the developers fill these units. These developments are not just for the homeless but for seniors and special needs as well. When the developers are happy a lot of our other problems go away.

#### Action Item 1d

- Sally: We haven't really touched on this yet.
- Pat: We need to reach out to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) offices and get their participation across the state. Is there a central office that we can deal with to get them to cooperate?
  - There are offices all over, central office in Lansing.
- Holly: Will help out with pulling together the information regarding the USDAs and possibly ask Linda Leforte help out.
  - She formed a committee on homelessness within the State Association of the PHA.
- Patty: GLD Management, Inc (have a lot of rural development properties) is a good resource to use as well and they could be a contact on this.
  - Patty to get contact information.
- Sally: Will look for someone from my office to help too.

#### Action item 1e

- Sally: believe this is done.
  - Delete
- This action plan needs to go to the training committee to help market the strategy to the private landlords.
  - The development of this is done but there needs to be more marketing.

#### Action Item 1f

- Need to understand which continuums need this and which are already doing it, with the housing resource centers and things like that.
- Sally: It might be possible for Janet Irrer and the Homeless Assistance Specialists to conduct a survey assessing the needs of the continuums.
  - For example; who needs funding, who already has funding, what types of things are these people already doing? This survey should encompass the entire state. This could also help us to find what housing resource specialists are out there.
  - We have already collected some of this information.
  - Would help to put it on a map, to see what is really out there.

#### Action Item 1g

- Needs to be raised at the community level.

- Maybe a revolving fund. Started one in Western Missaukee, contemplating it in Washtenaw.
- This was started a few years back in partnership with the Council of Michigan Foundations. I don't think it really took off.
  - The Challenge grants?
- Michelle: We have an endowment fund but it is nowhere near enough.
- Sally: Kalamazoo has a short-term rent subsidy program that is funded by the county and the city.
- Ellen could take a lead on this. Need to ask her if she can do this.
  - Figuring out what communities already have these, what models are out there, what is working, and what is not working. Help others who might be thinking of moving forward, how best to do this.
- MSHDA was going to do this for statewide security deposits to encourage for-profit developers to rent to at risk people, but it never really got off the ground. We should still look at the possibility.
- Muskegon sees an ebb and flow of funds. How do we get more money and information out there for this at the community level?
  - Could work with the training committee on how to get the information out to the communities.

#### Action Item 2a

- The qualified action plan has been modified to support. . . where we have the 10% throughout and a 25% set aside for supportive housing.
  - The issue will be can it be maintained.
  - Right now, it is looking like the direction MSHDA is heading in. Letting this go forward with slight modifications.
  - So 2a is done. Delete from Action Plan

#### Action Item 2b

- Sally: Are folks using the master leasing (no). Do you want to get rid of that as a strategy, does that even make sense right now?
  - Master leasing is when a service organization leases a block of rooms and then allows their people to live in the apartments.
  - They will lease blocks of rooms for Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative (MPRI) and SOS communities, and abuse shelters.
- Should we keep and/or promote this model?
  - Pat: I think so, only because we are trying to cut down shelter nights and eventually eliminate shelters. But the bottom line is we will always need places for people who are in emergencies.
- This is a good option for a housing first model.
  - Add it to Strategy 1, Action Plan 1a as a model for consideration.

#### Action Items 3a and 3b

- Jim's group is covering this.
- Holly and Jim will collaborate on strategies 3a and 3b. They are linked.

Table 1, below, provides an overview of the action steps in the strategies, who is assigned to lead the work, and who will support that lead.

<b>Table 1: Strategy Work Responsibilities</b> <b><i>Housing Assistance and Models Workgroup</i></b>		
<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Support Members</b>
<b><i>Strategy 1: Promote transition to “Housing First” orientation by community-based agencies and homeless service providers.</i></b>		
1a and 1b	Pat Caruso	Joe Tardella, Stacey Vandenberg, MSHDA staff
1c, 1d, 1e	Holly Pomranka	Michelle Wildman, MSHDA staff
<b><i>Strategy 2: Increase access to existing affordable housing opportunities, in both urban and rural areas, for homeless populations through state-local partnerships, planning, and prioritization.</i></b>		
1a	Jim Yarbrough	Patty Geisert
1b	Janet Irrer	Michelle Wildman
2a (to be combined with 1a)	Jim Yarbrough	Patty Geisert
2b	Jim Yarbrough	Patty Geisert
3a	Pat Caruso	DHS staff
<b><i>Strategy 3: Expand housing opportunities for homeless and at-risk populations through creation of working partnerships with property owners, landlords, and developers – linked to local plans for implementation</i></b>		
1a		
1b	<i>To be referred to the training committee</i>	
1c	John Peterson	Patti Geisert
1d	Holly Pomranka	Linda Leforte, MSHDA staff, Patti Geisert
1e	<i>Done and to be referred to training committee</i>	
1f	Janet Irrer	MSHDA staff
1g	Ellen Kissinger-Rothi	TBD
2a	<i>Done. To be deleted</i>	
2b	<i>To be moved to Strategy 1, Action Item 1a</i>	
3a and 3b	Jim Yarbrough and Holly Pomranka	TBD

### ***Concluding Comments***

Minutes will be detailed so that they can assist in facilitating the next meeting. The target for the team leaders to report back regarding progress will be the January meeting. Sally, Nick, and Michelle will get together regarding the management of the next call. Those of you in the lead on the tasks assigned please ask for assistance as needed from Sally or Nick.

### ***Tasks Completed***

- Set tasks and responsibilities for Strategies 1 and 2

- Reviewed Strategy 3
  - Revised Action Items
  - Set tasks and responsibilities for Strategy 3

### ***Tasks Assigned***

See “Strategy Work Responsibilities for the Housing Assistance and Models Workgroup” (Table above).

### ***Next Meeting***

- December 8th, 1.00 PM.
  - This will be a conference call, number to be provided later.
  - Nick will send out handouts by email
  - If you know you are unable to make the call please let Nick know beforehand, ([narmit@publicpolicy.com](mailto:narmit@publicpolicy.com))